

Public Notice on ESSA Alternate Assessment Waiver

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Assessment and Accountability Office is seeking comments on the following waiver request for the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), which will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (US ED). Comments and questions should be submitted to Melissa Fincher, Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, at mfincher@doe.k12.ga.us **no later than Wednesday, September 20, 2017.**

The ESSA includes a new statewide 1.0 percent participation cap in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for each content area (1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)). However, a State has the option of requesting a one-year waiver from the requirement if the State believes it will not meet the cap. The year-long waiver is intended to give state education agencies time to implement policies and supports to districts to allow the State to not exceed the cap.

The GaDOE is anticipating that Georgia will be above the 1.0 percent cap in at least one content area in 2017. In 2016, Georgia's elementary and middle schools assessed 1.3 percent of tested students using the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) in each of the four content areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). That same year, the GAA was used for 1.1 percent of high school students tested in English language arts and 1.1 percent of high school students tested in social studies. Mathematics and science were at or below the cap, at 0.9 percent and 1.0 percent respectively.

The waiver submission will include the following information, as outlined in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)ii-v:

- State-level data analysis a) showing the number and percentage of students in each subgroup who took the GAA, and b) validating the State has measured the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students and at least 95 percent of students with disabilities;
- assurances from the State that each local education agency (LEA) anticipated to exceed the 1.0 percent cap a) followed State guidelines under paragraph 200.6(d) - excluding (d)(6), and b) will address any disproportionality in the percentage of student subgroups under section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), or (D) being administered the GAA; and
- a plan and timeline by which a) the State will improve its guidelines under § 200.6(d), b) the State will take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will use the GAA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students in a content area, and c) the State will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking the GAA.

Prior to submitting this ESSA waiver request, the GaDOE is providing public notice to all interested parties across Georgia. The GaDOE is providing such notification by posting a public notice on its website of the intent to request a waiver of the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards 1.0 percent cap. In addition, the GaDOE has emailed information pertaining to the waiver to all district superintendents, Title I directors, assessment directors, special education directors, members of Parent to Parent of Georgia, and the State Advisory Panel for Special Education. Copies of all comments that GaDOE may receive from stakeholders in response to this notice will be attached to the waiver request sent to US ED.
